

city college news

Kudos to the college from tourism minister

Students in hospitality and tourism are not only headed towards a great career but they're on the right track at George Brown, said Ontario's Minister of Tourism and Recreation.

During his opening speech at the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism's Event Industry Symposium, the Honourable Jim Bradley assured students that they will have great job prospects when they leave school and complimented the college on the calibre of its graduates.

"Jobs are ready and waiting for students from this college program and others around Ontario," Bradley said at the Feb. 11th event. "Students today will be starting their careers at very exciting time."

In just seven weeks, 16 students in Special Events for Destination Tourism put together the Open the Door to 2004: Opportunities and Trends symposium as part of the applied learning component of their program.

In addition to inviting the minister, the students brought in an inspiring keynote speaker, Martin Perelmuter and a panel of professionals who work in different areas of the tourism sector.

"Build buzz within the industry," advised Perelmuter, president of Speakers Spotlight. "Buzz is genuine; it's sustainable excitement about who you are and what you do."

The student organizers were already doing just that as they received compliments and congratulations from many of the experts they had invited.

"You've done a wonderful



Ontario's Minister of Tourism and Recreation, Jim Bradley, talks to students, staff and other guests about the local and provincial tourism industry.

job of pulling together a diverse group of people from the same industry," said Gale Gingrich, the panel facilitator. "Networking is an incredible part of this business."

Gingrich, president of the Independent Meeting Planners Association of Canada, led the panel that included Eydie Sperling, the program manager for executive events at IBM, Pamela Versteeg, the director of member care and growth at

Tourism Toronto, Anthony Holl, a campaign director for the Toronto International Film Festival and Matt Nicholls, director of content for Meetings and Incentive Travel magazine.

Each panelist drew from his or her own unique experience to provide insight into the different aspects and avenues of the industry, the important role that events play in the tourism sector and what the future holds in terms of

opportunities and trends.

"This event allowed the students to apply skills learned while promoting themselves and the college," said professor Gary Hallam. "Many new partnerships were formed with event industry professionals from independents to large groups."

His students were successful in executing the event and learned a lot along the way, Hallam said.

"You have to take the training wheels off sometime," he said. "And doing this in a learning lab and a partially controlled environment helps to better prepare the students for industry."

The students were also very excited and proud to have garnered the attention and time of the minister.

"Sometimes all you have to do is ask — and be persistent afterwards," Hallam said.

"I think this also shows the minister's respect for George Brown College and its programs."

Hook, line and sinker for Student Success

Student Affairs is taking the old saying "give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime" and making it new again at George Brown.

With the Student Success Advisement pilot project, Bachelor of Applied Business and Early Childhood Education students are learning to tackle two challenging first-semester courses — Macroeconomics and

Foundations of ECE.

The project is based on a Supplemental Instruction (SI) model that is widely used in American universities and has been shown to increase students' academic success and retention, said Franky Chernin, co-ordinator of Student Success.

The SI pilot involves three components: innovative teaching strategies implemented by the professor, the help and guidance of SI leaders — former students of each course

— and out-of-class sessions facilitated by the leaders and attended by students who need extra help.

The one-hour sessions, held twice a week, give the students and SI leaders a chance to look at specific questions or concepts, figure out how to go about solving or understanding them and how their methods can be applied to other problems.

"We are integrating what

(continued on page 3)

GB reaches out to international community right here in the city

More than 1,000 newcomers to Canada gathered at the Toronto Congress Centre for the second annual Internationally Educated Professionals' Conference on Feb. 20 — and our college was out in full force to meet them.

Several college representatives made George Brown visible at the event, which was aimed at helping this unique group of professionals enter the Canadian labour market.

Deborah Clark, Chair of Community Services and Allied Health in the Centre for Continuous Learning, sat on a panel that focused on Industrial Pharmaceutical Technology and Abid Rana, an IT professor, was part of a discussion session on IT and Technology.

Rana focused on the advantages to obtaining Canadian credentials and the importance of developing good commun-

cations skills for success in today's workforce. He also introduced George Brown's Computer Programmer for Internationally Educated Professionals program — the only one of its kind in the college system.

"The response was excellent," said Rana about his presentation. "People were very excited."

Viktor Eugene Pochynok, a George Brown graduate, was also on hand to help showcase the college as he displayed the software program that he wrote and is now marketing, said Rana.

"It was a very good indication of the success of our program and shows that students are establishing themselves," he said about Pochynok's work.

Joshua Li, student services officer in IT, and Elizabeth Reid, a project manager, worked the college's main



Joshua Li (left) talks to attendees of the Internationally Educated Professionals' Conference about George Brown's programs aimed at helping newcomers further their education and access the job market.

display in the exhibition area.

"Our George Brown booth was the centre of attention throughout the event," said Li, adding that several programs in IT, health sciences and engineering garnered a lot of interest from the attendees.

"It turned out to be a grand showcase of the entire college, as well as an opportunity for us, on behalf of the college, to communicate with Toronto's fast-growing population of internationally educated professionals."

Join together in our differences

One of the things that George Brown takes great pride in is the diversity of its students and staff. The Diversity, Equity and Safety Committee, which promotes, communicates and celebrates work in the area of diversity, presents the following view of life at George Brown.

"Many people at the college need to wait for the elevators. We all know how frustrating it can be when an elevator finally comes and it is too crowded to get on.

For me, it is even more frustrating because I don't have a second choice, as I cannot use the stairs! It isn't always easy to ask, but it would be helpful if someone would be willing to get off the elevator and use the stairs.

People are not always aware that my wheelchair is

part of my personal body space. Please don't hang onto or lean on a person's wheelchair. Leaning on my wheelchair is like someone deciding to rest his or her foot on someone else's lap.

If I am on a crowded elevator, people don't always realize that their hot drinks can easily spill on me and that their backpacks often hit me in the face or back. Please be aware of who is around you on an elevator.

Remember that no questions are weird or impolite. Always ask if I need assistance, but please don't help me without asking first.

For example, if I am going up a ramp and you come up behind me and start to push my wheelchair, the shock could

make me lose my balance. It would be the same as if someone came and picked you up without asking first.

If I really do need assistance, I won't be ashamed to ask for help. Also, I don't assume everyone will be willing or able to help me.

Being in a wheelchair doesn't stop me from reaching my goals or doing what I want to do. My life using a wheelchair isn't more difficult, it is just different.

My wheelchair doesn't make me less active or uncomfortable about blending into the crowd, just like people who need glasses wear them without worrying about whether they are different from those who don't need glasses. They are just tools to help us



cope with day-to-day life.

I am sure we can all work together in understanding each of our individual differences."

**Helena Chu,
ASL-English Interpreter
Program, 2nd year**

Professor seeks to make peace

Robin Buyers is not one to just talk about peace.

She has actually gone looking for it in a place that has not seen it in 50 years — Colombia.

Buyers, a Community Worker professor, recently joined the Christian Peacemakers Teams (CPT), a human rights accompaniment group, in the South American country for three months.

From last October to December, Buyers lived in the industrial city of Barrancabermeja and in nearby rural communities, providing comfort, security and companionship to civilians surrounded by armed groups.

"Accompaniment is non-violent, third-party engagement in a conflict zone," she explained. "Armed groups know that CPT is tied to an international network of human rights activists — that's what keeps people alive and safe."

On Feb. 11, Buyers spoke to about 80 college staff, students and alumni on the history of the Colombian con-

flict and her volunteer work with CPT — an organization that helps civilians go about their daily lives in war-torn areas like Iraq and Hebron.

The roots of the 50-year-old Colombian civil war include a history of corruption, the concentration of wealth within a small elite and the neglect of the poor. Every year, 30,000 people are killed and 11 are kidnapped per day, Buyers said.

Using photos taken on her trip, she painted a vivid picture of how the violence is affecting the men, women and children trying to live in peace.

"Those of us in the field are the eyes and ears of the world," she said.

Buyers witnessed the fear of families whose houses were taken over by armed groups, the heartbreak of children whose parents had been murdered and the great loss of courageous human rights leaders to death and exile.

But with a smile on her face, she also described the joy of the children laughing and playing with the toys that



Robin Buyers (in the red cap) plays dominoes with the locals during her three-month human rights accompaniment trip in Colombia. Buyers, a Community Worker professor, showed this and other photos during a presentation to the college on Feb. 11.

CPT members carried with them and the hope of communities that were able to organize gatherings and celebrations despite the violence around them.

It is these images that motivate Buyers to really get involved.

"Those who believe peace is the way, must seek it where there is none," she said. "It's not going to help to sit at home talking about peace."

Buyers said she was happy that so many people came out

at the end of a long day to hear her presentation and she received positive feedback shortly after.

"I really feel many people, including myself, were inspired by (Robin's) talk," said Miranda Harpell, a recent graduate of the Community Worker program. "And it's so good to see something positive being done in the middle of so much war, death and hostility."

Student success

(continued from page 1)

to learn with how to learn," Chernin said.

This means that students are not just given the answer to that one tough question in the textbook; they are learning how to get the answers to any tough question in any textbook.

And so far, this approach seems to be working.

The pilot was also done last semester in Hotel Management, Culinary Management, Computer Programmer and Registered Practical Nursing. The results show an increase in higher grades for students involved in the project.

The number of students attending the SI sessions has gone up as some improve-

ments were made to the current pilot so they are expecting even better results at the end of this semester, Chernin said.

Amy Block, the project's learning specialist, shares well-researched learning strategies with the professors and the SI leaders both in class and in the sessions.

"It's sort of like a team. I work on the 'how to learn' and they are the 'what to learn,'" Block said. "The SI leaders are thrilled about the chance to learn about learning."

When the term is over, the project co-ordinators will meet with the two program areas, gather and analyze the results and make their recommendations on formulating a student

success plan that could be implemented throughout the college, said Chernin.

"The whole institution has to say that our job is student success. When we accept a student, we have an obligation to ensure that that student can be



Early Childhood Education students brainstorm and share problem-solving strategies with their peers and SI leaders.

Around George Brown

Although it was Intercession Week, more than 300 technology students attended the second annual **Technology Career Fair**, hosted by the **Industry Liaison Office** on Feb. 24. About 30 different companies and organizations attended including Workopolis, CIBC, the Canadian Armed Forces, EllisDon and the Construction Safety Association of Ontario. The Casa Loma gymnasium was abuzz with activity as students gathered around display booths, video presentations and the industry reps who were meeting and greeting their potential employees. "George Brown Technology graduates have the skills and technological expertise that we need in industry" said Murray Durante from HH Angus Consulting Engineers. "The Career Fair is a fantastic event for people, such as myself, to meet with these students and pick from among the best for job opportunities that we have."



Students and potential employers get the goods on each other at the Technology Career Fair.

It was a big week for awards in the Community Worker program as four students were honoured on Feb. 18 and 20. **Deanne Ravello** was presented with the **Douglas E. Light** award for her demonstrated commitment to the principles of labour. **Jesse Doehler-Knox** and **Keon Lee** were each given a **Millennium Excellence** award for their leadership, community involvement and academic success. On Feb. 20, **Robin Buyers**, a Community Worker professor, presented the **Phyllis Eileen Edwards** award to **Jessica Bonilla Eduardo** in recognition of her strong values and skills both inside and outside the classroom. Buyers created the award with the prize money that she received from her 2002 Crystal Apple Award.



From left to right: Jesse Doehler-Knox, Deanne Ravello and Keon Lee proudly hold up the envelopes that contain their Community Worker awards.



From left to right: Robin Buyers, Community Worker professor, presents Jessica Bonilla Eduardo with the Phyllis Eileen Edwards award. They are joined by Frank Buyers, Robin's father, and Georgia Quarato, Chair of Community Services.

Upcoming events

Hearing Instrument Specialist program Hearing Tests (Fridays 2 to 5 p.m.)

Second-year Hearing Instrument Specialist students are offering faculty and staff an opportunity to have their hearing tested under the supervision of an instructor. They are now accepting appointments, which will take place on Friday afternoons from 2 to 5 p.m. in Room 318B at Casa Loma. To book a free hearing test, please call Pamela Ashton at (416) 415-5000, ext. 3706 or e-mail pashon@gbrown.on.ca.

George Brown College's 12th annual Labour Fair

March 22 to 26

This year's Labour Fair is jammed packed with more than 80 in-class sessions with special guests and union speakers, extraordinary artistic performances, displays and videos. These interesting and informative events will take place at all George Brown campuses. For more information, please call (416) 415-5000, ext. 2549.

Winter/Spring 2004 Deaf Presentations

March 25 (3:30 to 5 p.m.)

The Deaf Upgrading Program is hosting a presentation on "Deaf Women Against Violence: Everywhere; Breaking Down Barriers." It will be presented in American Sign Language but an English interpreter can be requested. For more information, please contact Deanne Bradley at (416) 415-2651 TTY or Karen Walker at (416) 415-5000, ext. 0535.

Stories of Survival

March 30 (4 to 6 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m.)

The Centre for Community Services and Development presents Stories of Survival: When Youth is Stolen by Violence. Eva Olsson, a Holocaust survivor, and Benjamin Santamaria Ochoa, George Brown's Lecturer-in-Residence, will tell their stories about children and violence and offer insight into how to deal with this sensitive issue. A donation of \$3 from students and \$5 from others is encouraged with the proceeds going to the Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate program's student emergency loan fund. The event will be held in Room 128 at St. James. To RSVP, please call Dawn Zimmer at (416) 415-5000, ext. 2738.

Technology in the City

March 30 (11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.)

The third annual Tech in the City Open House and Competition, held at Casa Loma campus, will bring high school students and their parents, current students and industry representatives together for a day dedicated to technology. Display booths, facility tours, competitions and industry panel discussions are among the many activities planned. For more information, please call Lili Litwin at (416) 415-5000, ext. 4023 or e-mail llitwin@gbrown.on.ca.

If you attend college events...

...please remember to use the Safe Walk program to ensure a safe arrival at your car, streetcar stop or subway station. Co-ed escort teams depart from the lobbies of 200 King St., 300 Adelaide St. and the Davenport Road exit at Casa Loma every 15 minutes from 6:30 p.m. to 11:15 p.m. For a schedule or more information, call (416) 415-5000, ext. 2721 or log onto <http://www.gbrown.on.ca/orientation/safewalk.html>.

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